

# Halcon Community Primary School

Outer Circle, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 2BU

**Inspection dates** 8–9 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6 has not been consistent enough and so pupils have not reached the standards of which they are capable by the end of Year 6.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been well below average in reading, writing and mathematics during the past two years.
- Few pupils attain the higher National Curriculum levels.
- While teaching has improved, it has not been strong enough over time to promote good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Tasks are not always challenging enough for the most able pupils and this hinders their progress.
- Some leaders are new to their post and are not yet fully involved in checking and developing teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 and 2 have made good progress over time.
- The headteacher, leaders and staff have taken positive action to strengthen teaching particularly, in Years 3 to 6. As a result, most pupils are now making good progress.
- Leaders, staff and the governing body have created a safe and welcoming environment in which pupils can learn and develop.
- Teamwork among the staff is strong and there is a clear determination to do the best for pupils and their families.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school
- There are first-rate procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Pupils feel safe at school and enjoy the range of activities provided.
- Parents hold positive views about the care and education provided for their children.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors, parents and carers and pupils.
- Only one parent completed the online survey, Parent View but the inspector took account of the school's own survey carried out in May 2013.
- Pupils were heard to read and discussions were held with them about their reading.
- Questionnaires from 16 members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and the school's development planning.

## Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- A well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for specific groups of pupils, including those in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable staffing changes, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching good or better in all classes so that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress and reach higher standards by the end of Year 6 by:
    - ensuring that teachers always provide challenging and demanding tasks to extend the most able
    - making sure that teachers provide clear guidance so that pupils know what is expected of them.
  - Strengthen the role of new subject leaders so that they are fully involved in checking and improving the quality of teaching.
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## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- During the past two years, attainment by the end of Year 6 has been well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Weaknesses in teaching in the past have meant that pupils did not make enough progress through Years 3 to 6 and did not reach the standards they should have.
- Few pupils attained levels higher than those nationally expected by the end of Year 6. While the school's data indicate that this situation is improving, in a few lessons seen, the most able pupils were not provided with sufficiently challenging and demanding tasks and this hindered their rate of progress.
- Positive action has been taken to improve teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The improved teaching over the past 18 months has resulted in most pupils now making good progress. However, these improvements have not yet led to better attainment by the end of Year 6. The school's assessments indicate that attainment in the current Year 6 is higher than that of the previous two years.
- Children start in Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills well below those expected for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching, effective support and the interesting activities provided.
- In Reception, children made good progress in recalling and recording facts about dinosaurs. They described one dinosaur clearly: 'It has a long tail and short arms.' With adult help, they began to write a simple sentence about a dinosaur of their choice. Outdoors, they designed and built a dinosaur enclosure with large construction blocks.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has steadily improved during the past three years and is now broadly average.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because of the well-planned opportunities provided for them to discuss their learning in pairs and in small groups.
- Pupils' progress in reading is improving. The results of the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) reading check in 2013 were below average. Positive steps have been taken to ensure that pupils who are below expected standards catch up.
- Pupils' progress in writing has improved. Pupils write for a range of purposes. Those in Years 1 and 2 used their imagination well in writing their own version of the African story 'Handa's Surprise'. Across the school, pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing well. Handwriting and presentation are now much better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils take care and pride in their work.
- There are some good examples of pupils applying their writing skills in subjects other than English. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used instructional writing as they wrote clear and informative recipes in a cookery session. However, the most able are not always writing in sufficient detail and depth.
- In mathematics, pupils are making good progress in developing calculation skills. They use a range of strategies to solve problems. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 made good progress in solving a range of addition and subtraction problems using written methods.
- In 2013, the Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium attained lower standards than the others in mathematics, reading and writing. These pupils were 22 months behind the others in reading, 12 months in mathematics and seven months in writing. Across the school, the gap between these groups of pupils and others is closing because of better teaching and support.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress. They receive effective guidance and support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through physical education lessons and the additional sporting activities provided such as dodgeball, football, rugby and table tennis.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- Teaching has not been strong enough over time to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress through Years 3 to 6. Inconsistencies in teaching in the past have led to pupils' underachieving in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching has improved and is now mostly good, but some weaknesses remain. Teachers do not always move the most able pupils onto more demanding tasks soon enough. When this happens, pupils do not make the progress they should.
- All teachers create a positive classroom environment for pupils to learn in. Teachers and support staff establish strong relationships with pupils and manage them well. Teachers now expect pupils to do their very best and pupils rise to these high expectations.
- Teachers generally convey the purpose of the lesson clearly to pupils, and as a result, pupils know and understand what they are expected to learn. However, occasionally pupils' progress is hindered by a lack of explicit guidance by the teacher.
- In Reception, there is a good range of activities on offer. Children receive effective guidance in speaking, reading and writing.
- The teaching of reading is given good attention. Pupils have regular sessions which consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding of phonics. In the teaching of mathematics, pupils have good opportunities to acquire knowledge, deepen their understanding of mathematical operations and apply skills to solve problems.
- Pupils are keen to participate in their learning. For example, in an exciting Year 2 lesson, pupils made good progress in creating a series of dance moves. They were inspired by the teacher's enthusiasm as he read extracts from 'Dinosaurumpus' with animation and expression. His high quality teaching motivated the pupils to create, practise and refine their own movements, thus improving their skills in dance.
- Teaching in Year 3 to 6 has improved over the past 18 months and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils made good progress in ordering decimals. The teacher used questioning skilfully to recap on pupils' previous learning and to check their understanding of place value. Her explanations and demonstrations were extremely clear and informative. Pupils were fully engaged and made good gains in deepening their understanding. For the main task, they were challenged well and their interest was sustained because activities were well suited to their different abilities.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. Pupils receive good guidance and support from teaching assistants and, consequently, progress well. Learning materials and tasks are well matched to needs.
- Since the previous inspection, individual target setting for pupils, feedback to pupils and the marking of their work have improved considerably. Pupils have clear individual learning targets to guide their learning, particularly in writing and mathematics. They know what they are aiming for. Teachers' marking and oral feedback provide constructive comments and inform them of the next steps in their learning.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour and safety of pupils have improved from satisfactory to good because of the action taken by the headteacher and staff.
- The parents and carers who responded to the school's survey strongly agreed that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after at school. They were also satisfied that the school promotes good behaviour. The inspection findings reflect the parents' and carers' positive views about behaviour and safety.
- Children in Reception enjoy their learning and have developed strong relationships with adults and other children. They made good progress in their personal and social development.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 show a keen interest in their learning and participate well in the activities provided. Pupils commented, 'We learn lots of new things', 'Art is my favourite lesson' and 'I just

like learning'. Just occasionally, pupils are less well focused when they receive insufficient guidance about their learning.

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons, in the playground and in other areas of the school. The school's records show that behaviour is typically good. There are clear systems of rewards and sanctions and effective steps are taken to deal with any unacceptable behaviour.
- The few pupils with challenging behaviour are skilfully managed by staff so that other pupils' learning is not disrupted. The recently established nurture provision is already having a positive impact on supporting pupils with behavioural and emotional needs.
- The school's arrangements to ensure that all pupils are protected, safe and secure are outstanding. Procedures are rigorous, fully understood by all staff and consistently applied. All the pupils spoken to stated that they felt safe at school and very well looked after by adults. Pupils remarked, 'We get lots of help here' and 'Staff are kind and take care of us'.
- Pupils show a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including name calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. They correctly described bullying as, 'Being mean to someone and not stopping'. When pupils were asked if there was any bullying in the school, typical comments were 'Hardly any' and 'None at all'. They were very clear that any unpleasant behaviour, including bullying, is always dealt with by staff.
- There are clear procedures and rewards to promote good attendance. Staff work had to improve attendance. Attendance is showing steady improvement but is still below average.

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- The school is not yet good because leaders and managers have not established consistently good progress for pupils over time in Years 3 to 6.
- Some subject leaders are new to their post and are not yet fully engaged in checking and developing teaching. There are clear plans for this to happen.
- There are numerous strengths to the leadership and management of the school but the positive changes and improvements made have not yet brought about the desired outcomes for pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is well regarded by pupils, parents, staff and governors. She provides strong educational direction and conveys high expectations to pupils and staff. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Senior leaders have created a strong team of staff where there is a professional culture of continuous improvement and doing the very best for pupils and their families.
- Much emphasis has been placed on improving teaching, and some good teaching appointments have been made. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised and there is now greater consistency in areas of teaching such as lesson planning, target setting and marking. New teachers, including those new to the profession, receive good mentoring and support.
- The quality of teaching is carefully checked by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and visiting advisers and a national leader of education (NLE). The school has a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- There are good procedures for appraising the performance of teachers. Training and improvement targets are well linked to pupils' progress and school improvement priorities.
- The curriculum provides an appropriate range of subjects and topics. Pupils enjoy the additional activities, such as clubs and educational visits. The sports grant has been used effectively and there are benefits from a sports partnership with local schools.
- The school has a positive, purposeful and welcoming atmosphere. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. There are no signs of discrimination and all pupils are valued and have full access to the activities provided.
- The pupil premium funding is properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional support. Improved teaching plus one-to-one tuition and small group teaching are having a positive impact

on the progress of those eligible for the funding.

- A national leader of education and external advisers has supported the school well in improving teaching and learning. A school review, commissioned by the local authority, was carried out by external advisers in April 2013. The review clearly recognised the school's improvements but was less effective in taking full account of the school's published data and in alerting the school to the likely outcome of an inspection. As a result, the school and members of the governing body believe that the school's overall effectiveness is better than it is.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body are very supportive of the headteacher and the school. They show a clear understanding of the school's information about attainment and progress. Governors have been kept well informed about improvement to teaching and learning. However, the governors have judged the overall effectiveness of the school based on recent improvements rather than taking full account of pupils' attainment and progress over time. The governors have a clear understanding of performance management procedures and ensure that promotion and pay awards are based on the progress that pupils make. They are aware that teachers receive good support and training to help improve their skills. They ensure that the pupil premium funding is used wisely and check the impact of the funding on pupils' progress. The governors have attended a range of useful courses to help them in their role.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123707
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	413092

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Fayle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Vanessa Coles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01823 337051
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